

Plan Basics



Above: A view across Woodlawn Lake towards the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower and the Tower of the Americas.

Introduction

This chapter of the Near Northwest Community Plan provides information about the planning area, its boundaries, how the plan was initiated, the plan drafting process utilizing citizen input, plan outreach and the implications of recognition of the plan by the City of San Antonio.

Near Northwest Community Plan

Plan Basics

The Near Northwest Community Plan is a partnership effort of the Donaldson Terrace, Hillcrest, Inspiration Hills, Jefferson, Los Angeles Heights/Keystone, Maverick, Monticello Park, Woodlawn Lake, and Sunshine Estates Neighborhoods, the Jefferson-Woodlawn Lake Community Development Corporation (CDC), and the City's Planning Department. The plan is the result of nearly a year of hard work by the Planning Task Force and other active residents and business people.

Plan Boundaries

The planning area is bound by Loop 410 to the north, IH-10 to the east, Culebra, Saint Cloud and Bandera to the south and Callaghan to the west, excluding the separate municipality of Balcones Heights.



Planning Area Map

The interstate system composes the northern and eastern boundaries of the planning area, providing for both a visual and physical separation from the adjoining neighborhoods located to the north and east.

To the south, Culebra Road is a major commercial thoroughfare. Several community landmarks, including the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower and St. Mary's University, are located adjacent to Culebra Road. The planning area boundary follows Culebra Road to Saint Cloud where it travels north to meet Bandera. The intersection where Culebra Road branches into Bandera Road is included within the planning area boundaries.

To the west, the planning area boundary follows Callaghan Road. Callaghan Road serves as a major thoroughfare and is home to several large office complexes and commercial developments located near Loop 410.

Why create a plan?

Developed by neighbors, businesses, neighborhood associations, community organizations, religious institutions, schools, developers, investors, and other interested groups, the Near

Northwest Community Plan is a blueprint for action. By setting goals, objectives and action steps, the neighborhoods create a vision and identify the steps needed to reach their goals. This plan organizes many of the community's ideas into a single document that can be shared with residents, potential community partners and investors.

Planning Area Basics

The Near Northwest Community is home to about 50,000 people according to the 2000 Census (see Appendix A: Planning Area Demographics). This number represents a 17 percent increase in population from the 1990 Census data and reverses a slight population decline seen between 1980 and 1990.

According to the 2000 Census, planning area residents are 78 percent Hispanic, 14 percent Anglo, 2 percent African-American and 6 percent other races and ethnicities. Since the 1980 Census, all races and ethnicities have experienced an increase with the exception of Anglos. The number of Anglos within the community decreased by 36 percent between 1990 and 2000.

The Claritas estimated 1999 median household income of \$30,494 is slightly below the citywide median income of \$32,238. According to the 1990 Census, the median home value in the planning area was \$53,100 which is higher than the citywide median of \$49,700.

The development of the planning area's neighborhoods began in the eastern portion of the planning area and generally moved to the west throughout the 1900s to 1950s (see Appendix B: Community History). The eastern half of the planning area is characterized by bungalows and two story dwellings in a variety of architectural styles. The Monticello Park and Fulton Street Historic Districts are found in this portion of the planning area.

The western portion of the planning area is characterized by ranch style and two-story dwellings. Many of the homes in this portion of the planning area were developed in the late 1940s and 1950s.



Monticello Park house



Maverick house

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In the 1990s through today, new families and businesses are attracted to the established neighborhoods found within the planning area. The Jefferson-Woodlawn Lake CDC, a Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR) Project, is organized to revitalize the Deco District area along Fredericksburg Road. Neighbors are interested in similar efforts beginning in the area's other commercial corridors.

Getting Started

The neighborhoods successfully submitted a 2000 application to request the Planning Department's assistance in developing a community plan. In January 2001, the Planning Department began meeting with the Planning Task Force to develop a Memorandum of Understanding. The Planning Task Force (see Acknowledgements or Appendix C: Resource Directory for a listing) is composed of representatives of planning area neighborhoods, businesses, religious institutions and schools. An initial team was proposed in the application and expanded after selection. The Memorandum of Understanding outlined both the Planning Task Force's and the Planning Department's responsibilities for the completion of the plan.

Community-Based Process

The Near Northwest Community Plan was developed following the guidelines set out in the *Community Building and Neighborhood Planning Program*, adopted by City Council in October 1998.



Kids enjoying the Moonwalk at the Spring Social

A Spring Social was held in March 2001 at Woodlawn Lake Park to celebrate the beginning of the planning process (see Appendix D: Meeting Calendar). Hundreds of neighbors gathered in the park to learn more about the planning process. Early attendees were given free t-shirts and free saplings. Neighborhood groups and area schools set up food booths for community fundraisers. Community agencies and City departments provided information about available services.

Two community meetings were held in March to give participants an opportunity to talk about the planning area's strengths and weaknesses. Community stakeholders, including neighbors, business owners, neighborhood association representatives, religious institution members, school officials

and other interested groups, were invited to attend all three March events and offer their input into the planning process.

Between April and May 2001, four additional outreach efforts were organized by neighborhood volunteers. At three neighborhood meetings and a street party, people were asked to provide input on what was good and bad about the neighborhood.

At the June community meeting, participants reviewed maps and handouts of all the strengths and weaknesses identified by the community at meetings held between March and May.

In July, a Plan Writing Conference was held to draft the majority of the plan. Participants divided into three groups: the Heart of the Neighborhood Work Group, the Getting Around Town Work Group, and the Places Where We Play, Gather and Learn Work Group. Each group met all day, developing goals and action steps for improving the community. The groups worked closely with the "experts" in attendance to develop achievable and implementable plans (see Acknowledgements or Appendix C: Resource Directory for a listing).



Participants at the Plan Writing Conference

The draft plan resulting from the Plan Writing Conference was reviewed by a small, representative community group in August and September. The draft plan also was presented at a business community meeting held in October.

During October and November 2001, relevant City departments had an opportunity to review the plan for consistency with City policies. The agencies proposed as lead partners or partnerships also were asked to review and support the goals and actions found in the plan.

A final draft of the plan was presented at a December community meeting. With the December meeting changes included, the plan was presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for consideration. An Open House Celebration will follow plan adoption.

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Community Outreach

The Planning Department, together with the partnering neighborhoods and the Jefferson-Woodlawn Lake CDC, worked to encourage participation in the community planning process. In addition to a mailing list that included over 5,000 neighborhood association members, business owners, Jefferson-Woodlawn CDC members, registered voters and meeting attendees, each neighborhood association published the meeting dates in their newsletters, Planning Task Force members hung posters at area businesses and volunteers requested meeting announcements in area religious institutions' newsletters.

For the Spring Social and March community meetings, an over the street banner was generously donated by City Councilperson Ed Garza. The Council Office's publicity funding also included free t-shirts given away at the Spring Social and four large signs that were placed along the Woodlawn Lake Park walking trail for the March and June community meetings.

For each of the community meetings, excluding the July Plan Writing Conference, more than 4,000 flyers were provided for all of the students of the area elementary schools. Press releases also were sent to the *San Antonio Express News*.

Recognition by the City of San Antonio

After a review by City departments and a final community meeting, the Near Northwest Community Plan was forwarded to the Planning Commission for consideration. The Planning Commission reviews the document to ensure the Near Northwest Community Plan was created through an inclusive process, is consistent with City policies and accurately reflects the community's values.

After Planning Commission consideration, the plan was forwarded to the City Council for adoption as a component of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan. An approved plan is used by City departments, boards and commissions as a guide for decision making. Key projects may be selected from the plan to be included in the Annual Improvement Project Report. The report is provided to City Council as a part of the budget process.



T-Shirt graphic designed by community residents and staff

Consistency with Other Plans

The Near Northwest Community Plan is consistent with the ideas found in the *1997 Master Plan*, the *1978 Major Thoroughfare Plan* and the *1999 Parks System Plan*.

The plan also is supported by the following Master Plan goal:

Neighborhoods, Goal 2: Strengthen the use of the Neighborhood Planning Process and neighborhood plans.

Plan Contents

The Plan Summary Chapter reviews the community's goals and objectives for neighborhood improvement. The Taking Action Chapter describes the implementation steps the community will undertake to ensure the plan's vision becomes a reality. This chapter and the following three chapters, Heart of the Neighborhood, Getting Around Town, and Places Where We Play, Gather and Learn, include goals, objectives, action steps, lead partners, proposed partnerships and potential funding sources to achieve the community's desired vision.

Lead partners are the groups who have volunteered to begin the work of developing the partnerships necessary to implement the action steps. An initial listing of the partnering groups is included under proposed partnerships. The community also identified potential funding sources for the plan's action steps. The lead partner, together with the other partners, could approach these funding sources once the work of coordination is underway.

The Measuring Our Success Chapter describes the indicators the community will use to judge progress toward the plan goals. Finally, the appendices contain background and resource material for the plan.

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